



Sri Lanka Facts

Country Name	: Conventional long form	: Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka
	: Conventional short form	: Sri Lanka
	: Former	: Ceylon
Size	: 65,525 sq km	
Capital	: Sri Jayawardenepura	
Commercial Capital	: Colombo	
Government	: Sri Lanka, is a free, independent and sovereign nation with a population of 19.5 million (2004 est). Legislative power is exercised by a Parliament, elected by universal franchise on proportional representation basis. A President, who is also elected by the people, exercises executive power including defense. Sri Lanka enjoys a multi party system, and the people vote to elect a new government every six years.	
National Flag	: National Flag of Sri Lanka is the Lion Flag. A Lion bearing a sword in its right hand is depicted in gold on red background with a yellow border. Four Bo leaves pointing inwards are at the four corners. Two vertical bands of green and orange at the mast end represent the minority ethnic groups. It is an adaptation of the standard of the last King of Sri Lanka.	
National Anthem	: "Sri Lanka Matha" composed by late Mr. Ananda Samarakoon.	
National Flower	: The Blue Water Lily (Nymphaea stellata) is the National Flower.	
Population	: 19.5 million	
Population Density	: 296 people per sq km	
Life Expectancy at Birth	: 76.4 female, 71.7 male (2001 est)	
Literacy Rate	: 92.5% (2003 est)	
Languages	: Sinhala & Tamil is widely spoken throughout Sri Lanka.	
Ethnic Mix	: Sinhalese, 74%; Tamil, 18%; Muslim 7%; Burgher (descendants of Dutch and Portuguese colonist) and others 1%	
Religion	: Buddhism 70%; Hinduism 16%; Christianity 7%; Islam 7%	
Climate	: Low lands – tropical, average 27°C Central Hills – cooler, with	

temperatures dropping to 14°C. The south-west monsoon brings rain to the western, southern and central regions from May to July., while the north-eastern monsoon occurs in the north and east in December and January. Sri Lanka boasts of a good climate for holiday-makers throughout the year.



SRI LANKA – FORWARD PROGRESS.

OVERVIEW:

More than a year ago, Sri Lanka ended a 25-year, 10-month conflict with a terrorism group known as the LTTE. Since that time, no terrorist incidents have occurred in Sri Lanka. Instead, the government and people of Sri Lanka have returned to peaceful livelihoods and commerce. The government has devoted millions of dollars to re-development projects to restore life in Northern Sri Lanka, which for years was neglected under the LTTE. Roads have been opened and rebuilt and security checkpoints eliminated. Local elections in the North, as well as presidential and parliamentary elections, have been held without strife. The vast majority of people displaced by the fighting have returned home. Foreign investment and tourism has increased rapidly, and Sri Lanka's economy is expected to grow by nearly seven percent in 2010, despite the global economic downturn.

Sri Lanka's Economy:

WORLD BANK REPORT ON SRI LANKA

May 14, 2010 - Sri Lanka's economy expanded by 3.3% in the second half of 2009, the fastest rate recorded since 2002. Increases in foreign direct investment and tourism are expected to sustain and accelerate Sri Lanka's growth throughout 2010.

Economic indicators

- GDP 2007 (US\$ billions): 32.4
- GDP Growth 2007: 6.8%
- GDP per capita Growth 2007: 6.5%

Source: World Bank "[At a Glance.](#)" (pdf)

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Sri Lanka's Stability in a Weak Global Economy

During the second half of 2009, the economy expanded by 3.3%, the fastest rate ever recorded since 2002. Indicators, such as increased registration in new motor-vehicle registration and electricity generation, confirmed a strong increase in economic activity for the region. In addition, the agriculture, transportation, and communication sectors showed strong performance in the last quarter of 2009, with the hotel industry growing approximately 32% due to an influx of tourists after the end of the conflict.

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND, MAY 21, 2010:

"Overall economic conditions are improving as expected, and the economy is likely to show strong growth this year. External balances are strong, remittance inflows continue at a high rate, tourism prospects continue to improve rapidly, and gross reserves remain at comfortable levels. We continue to assess the central bank's monetary stance as appropriate—with bank lending only slowly beginning to rebound, and economic growth still below potential, we see little sign of emerging demand-driven inflationary pressures, and average inflation for the year as a whole is expected to remain in the single digits.

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK:

FACT SHEET

As of 31 December 2009

Sri Lanka's social indicators are among the best in the South Asian region. The country has achieved near universal literacy and, perhaps more remarkably, girls are on par with boys. Sri Lanka's poverty level is comparatively low at 15.2%. Sri Lanka is now categorized as a middle-income status country by the International Monetary Fund. With the end of military operations in mid-2009, Sri Lanka's economy is expected to perform better, recording growth of about 7% per annum over the period 2010–2011.

The Government of Sri Lanka's 10-year development plan sees a key role for the state in accelerating economic growth, with a focus on less developed regions and also in promoting Sri Lanka as an economic hub in South Asia. Key policy documents advocate infrastructure development, as well as livelihood support in rural areas.

BLOOMBERG:

Sri Lanka May Become 'Hong Kong of India' After War (Update2)

By Cherian Thomas - June 18, 2009 05:08 EDT

June 18 (Bloomberg) -- Sri Lanka's economy can bounce back from its weakest growth in six years and become the "Hong Kong of India" as the end of almost three decades of civil war boosts business opportunities, HSBC Private Bank said.

Decades of fighting on the Indian Ocean island shackled its \$32 billion economy, which according to figures released yesterday expanded 1.5 percent last quarter from a year earlier as

the global recession intensified the slowdown. Ports, retailers, apparel and tea exporters could lead a recovery after the Tamil Tiger rebels were defeated last month.

“The rebound will be spectacular,” said Arjuna Mahendran, the Singapore-based chief investment strategist for Asia at HSBC Private Bank, which oversees \$494 billion in assets. “To start with, Sri Lanka’s location gives its port a natural advantage.”

TOURISM

Tourism arrivals in Sri Lanka began an immediate climb after the end of the conflict in May 2009, and have continued to improve monthly. In 2010, the number of arrivals was more than 50,000 a month through March, compared to 25,000 to 37,000 monthly for the same period a year earlier. Sri Lanka tourism officials plan to add 30,000 luxury hotel rooms by 2016 to meet the increased need.

THE NEW YORK TIMES

January 10, 2010

The 31 Places to Go in 2010

1. Sri Lanka

For a quarter century, Sri Lanka seems to have been plagued by misfortune, including a brutal civil war between the Sinhalese-dominated government and a separatist Tamil group. But the conflict finally ended last May, ushering in a more peaceful era for this teardrop-shaped island off India’s coast, rich in natural beauty and cultural splendors.

DAILYCANDY.COM

The civil war is mostly over, and Sri Lanka is now stable and safe — and as beautiful, tropical, and friendly as ever. The conflict was primarily in the north, and our itinerary will have you roaming the south for adventure (elephant safaris), history (colonial fort towns, old Buddhist temples), rain forests (and mountains and tea plantations), and gorgeous beaches. It’s pretty much the best place we’ve ever been.

Really, there’s only one downside to Sri Lanka: Eventually, you have to leave.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

SRI LANKA

MIA No More

After the tsunami of 2004 and the resolution of a decades-long civil war, Sri Lanka is finally starting to look like its old self: a peaceful destination where surf lineups are nonexistent despite world-class waves and centuries-old tea estates are lined with mountain bike-ready trails. "The silver lining of the civil war is that the land and wildlife have remained untouched," says Lisa Bolger, trip coordinator for Access Trips, one of the very few outfitters leading excursions to the Indian Ocean island this coming year.

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE

The conflict left nearly 300,000 people without homes. They were housed in temporary villages run by the government and aided by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations. As of January 2010, most displaced people had returned home or opted to live with relatives. About 55,000 IDPs remain in government centers; of that number, 25,000 come and go from the centers.

Globally, the average stay for a refugee in a camp is 17 years. Sri Lanka resettled its IDPs in just eight months.

CHILD SOLDIERS:

The LTTE forcibly recruited thousands of children to carry out its fight. The government Sri Lanka, working with UNICEF, has established child

soldier rehabilitation centers to help these children return to normal lives with their families. Innovative programs using sports and job skills training have led several hundred former child soldiers to return to school and take college entrance exams. Families may visit the former children soldiers regularly as the children prepare to rejoin society.

UNICEF: SRI LANKA, UNICEF TEAM UP FOR INNOVATIVE CHILD SOLDIER REHAB

Cricket leadership programme helps former child soldiers

'Beyond the boundaries' of sport

Since the end of the conflict, nearly 600 children formerly associated with armed groups have benefited from UNICEF-supported education, vocational, recreational and psycho-social activities.

A key aspect of rehabilitation is 'Cricket Peer Leader' training – a unique sport-for-development partnership with the ICC, UNICEF, the Government of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka Cricket and the non-governmental organization Cricket for Change UK. "Cricket can be rightly proud of helping to develop a project which goes beyond the boundaries of our great sport," said ICC Chief Executive Haroon Logart.

Sri Lanka Fact Sheet

- Since gaining independence in 1948, Sri Lanka has enjoyed the longest period of continuous multi-party democracy with universal suffrage of a non-western country.
- Sri Lanka was the first country in the region to open up its economy and practice free trade policies.
- Commercial contacts between the people of Sri Lanka and the USA are over 200 years old. In 1787 New England sailors first anchored in the harbors of Sri Lanka to engage in trade.
- During World War II, Sri Lanka served as an important base for Allied forces.
- In 1960, Sri Lanka gave the world its first elected female Head of State.
- During the Cold War, Sri Lanka's foreign policy of non-alignment carried undertones of alliance to the U.S. and Western Europe.
- During the Persian Gulf War, Sri Lanka was the only country in Asia to offer refueling bases for U.S. warplanes.
- The United States has provided counterterrorism training to Sri Lankan government agencies as well as to the country's banking sector.
- Sri Lanka is cooperating with the U.S. in implementing the Container Security Initiative and Megaports Program. Sri Lanka has also joined the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI).
- Sri Lanka's population is 20.1 million. Its ethnic groups are: Sinhalese (74%), Tamils (18%), Muslims (7%), others (1%).
- Sri Lanka permits freedom of religion. Four of the world's major religions are practiced in Sri Lanka: Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity. Article 10 of the Constitution guarantees freedom of religion for all.
- Sinhala and Tamil are both official languages. Sri Lanka's language policy, as enshrined in the articles 18 and 19 of Chapter IV of the Constitution, recognize Sinhala and Tamil as national languages and English as the link language.
- Sri Lanka has exceptional socio-economic indicators for a middle income developing country. In the UNDP's 2008 Human Development Index (HDI) released December 18, 2008; Sri Lanka was listed 104 out of 179 countries.

SRI LANKA'S ECONOMY

Sri Lanka's economy is truly on its way to become the "wonder of Asia." Within one year of defeating terrorism and unifying our island, the Sri Lankan economy has seen unprecedented growth. Sri Lanka's growth rates and financial indicators are nothing short of staggering.

- Sri Lanka's economy is the second-fastest growing in Asia.
- Sri Lanka's stock market was Asia's top performer in 2009.
- The per capita income in Sri Lanka more than doubled in the past four years causing the IMF to upgrade the nation to "middle income" status.
- In 2010 Sri Lanka has record highs in external reserves while boasting record lows in unemployment and inflation in the midst of a global recession.
- New York Times named Sri Lanka the #1 place to travel in the world in 2010.
- HSBC conducted a business study on Sri Lanka in 2010 and remarked that "Sri Lanka will be to India what Hong Kong is to China."
- International rating agencies such as S&P and Fitch upgraded Sri Lanka's sovereign rating twice over the last year.
- Sri Lanka's last sovereign bond issuance in 2010 was oversubscribed by 13 times in an unprecedented indication of investor confidence.
- The Millenium Development Goals set by the UN for Sri Lanka for the year 2015 will be met by the end of this year due to high economic growth and low inflation.
- Tourism in Sri Lanka is up by over 50% from last year (2009).

THE LESSON LEARNED AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

- On May 15, 2010 His Excellency President Mahinda Rajapaksa appointed an independent Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) modeled after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that investigated the apartheid in South Africa.
- The 8-member commission is designed to look at “Lessons Learned” from February 2002 to May 2009, as well as propose a strategy to bolster reconciliation. The diverse and esteemed commission is chaired by a former Attorney General and its membership includes two Tamils, a Muslims and two US citizens.
- The LLRC was formed with a broad mandate; to explore all aspects of the 26-year civil conflict, including issues of human rights and humanitarian standards and assure accountability for responsible parties. The stated Mandate of the Commission is to inquire and report on the following matters:
 - The facts and circumstances which led to the failure of the ceasefire agreement operationalized on 21st February, 2002 and the sequence of events that followed thereafter up to the 19th of May, 2009.
 - Whether any person, group or institution directly or indirectly bear responsibility in this regard;
 - The lessons we would learn from those events and their attendant concern, in order to ensure that there will be no recurrence;
 - The methodology whereby restitution to any person affected by those events or their dependants or their heirs, can be affected;
 - The institutional administrative and legislative measures which need to be taken in order to prevent any recurrence of such concerns in the future, and to promote further national unity and the reconciliation among all communities, and to make any such other recommendations with reference to any of the matters that have been inquired into under the terms of the Warrant.
- The LLRC commenced meetings on August 11, 2010. The work of the commission is now underway; it is operating without government interference and is dedicated to fairness and impartiality. Its work is transparent -- open to the public and media coverage. Any person or organization is free to give evidence before the Commission. All testimony is open to members of the public, unless the witness requests to give evidence by camera.
- In December 2010, Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa invited the “Panel of Experts” appointed by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon to visit Sri Lanka and meet with the LLRC and share information.
- Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has said, *“The United States strongly supports political and ethnic reconciliation in Sri Lanka. Such commissions of inquiry have played an important role in advancing accountability and redressing wrongs in other countries emerging from periods of internal strife.”*